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Red Lodge Area Economic Development Corp.



P O Box 454 Red Lodge Montana 59068

March 9, 2009-03-09

SENATE FINANCE & CLAIMS

Exhibit No. 16

Date 3-10-09

Bill No. HB 123

Dear Senator Bales and Committee:

Please support and pass HB 123. This measure and the following programs are very important to economic development in Montana:

Growth Through Agriculture

CRDC's

:Montana Technology Innovation Partnership

Montana Trade and Int'l Relations Sureau

Small Business Development Centers

Montana Manufacturing Extension Center

Montana Cooperative Development Center

MT Board of Research

Thank you,

Estelle Tafoya, Ph.D.

Estelle Tafoya

Red Lodge Area Economic Development Corp.



Butte Local
Development
Corporation

March 9, 2009

Senate Finance and Claims Committee
Montana State Legislature
State Capital
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Members of the Senate Finance and Claims Committee;

On behalf of the Butte Local Development Corporation (BLDC), I would like to ask for your support of HB 123. The extension of the programs covered under this bill is extremely important to further economic development activities throughout Montana.

The programs that will be extended by the passage of HB 123 are designed to directly assist clients by offering technical and financial assistance to small businesses which are the life-blood of Montana's economy. The support provided by the various programs can mean the difference in a project succeeding or failing. These programs are helpful to both start-up and existing businesses.

The BLDC utilizes the services provided by these programs on a regular basis. The technical assistance the programs offer is unique and extremely valuable for our clients. The public-private partnership that exists has proven to be very successful and will hopefully continue.

Again the BLDC asks you to support HB 123 in order that Montana's local economies can maintain their existing businesses and expand for our future growth.

If you have any questions regarding our request for this piece of legislation, feel free to contact me at 723-4349.

Thank you in advance for your support

Jim Smitham
Executive Director

480 East Park St. • PO Box 507 • Butte, Montana 59703
(406) 723-4349 • fax (406) 723-1539 • www.buttemontana.org

This is an Equal Opportunity program. Discrimination is prohibited by Federal Law. Complaints of discrimination may be filed with USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Bldg., 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410.





Montana AMBASSADORS

The MONTANA AMBASSADORS
a volunteer, not-for-profit organization of leaders in business,
education, and the professions with a common dedication to
living and doing business in Montana and furthering the best
interests of the state, serving at the pleasure of the Governor.

March 9, 2009

TO: Senate Finance and Claims Committee

RE: HB123 (Extend coal trust funded econ dev programs--reduce statutory appropriations)

Montana Ambassadors is a volunteer, not-for-profit organization whose members include over 150 leaders in business, education, and government. As an organization, the Montana Ambassadors is dedicated to helping develop Montana's business environment.

Montana Ambassadors encourage your support of HB123. For nearly ten years, these key economic development programs have proven themselves to be vital to business owners. As a result, these programs have made a huge impact on the economy of Montana. Each of the programs included in this bill have leveraged far more dollars for the state than they cost the state.

Montana Ambassadors is part of the 2010 Coalition that was formed for the specific purpose of supporting these programs. As Ambassadors for the State of Montana, we strongly encourage you to support this bill and reinvest in economic development for Montana.

Sincerely,

Ken Richardson
Immediate Past President

PO Box 722
Anaconda, Montana 59711
Ph: 406.563.5353 Fx: 406.563.5476
Email: gloria@montanaambassadors.com
<http://www.montanaambassadors.com>



March 9, 2009

TO: Members of the Senate Finance and Claims Committee

FROM: Sheila Rice, Executive Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sheila Rice", written over the printed name.

RE: **HB 123** to extend the sunset on key economic development programs

NeighborWorks is a non-profit organization which has assisted more than 4,000 families into sustainable homeownership and developed nearly 300 homes affordable to low and moderate income working families.

We support HB 123 because we see the importance of the creation of quality jobs paying good wages in order for families to have the opportunity to purchase a home. HB 123 extends the sunset on key economic development programs that are proven as effective in creating new jobs in Montana.

Please support HB 123 to insure Montana's economic future is bright and clear.



MILES CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

1010 Main Street, Miles City, Montana 59301
Email: milesecon@midrivers.com

Phone: 406-234-2705

Fax: 406-874-3454

Website: 4miles-city-business.com

Monday, March 09, 2009

Senate Finance and Claims Committee
Montana Senate
Helena, MT 59601

Attention: Senators Keith Bales, Dave Lewis, Gregory Barkus, Debby Barrett, John Brenden, John Brueggeman, John Esp, Rick Laible, Jim Peterson, Rick Ripley, Ryan Zinke, Mike Cooney, Steven Gallus, Ken Hansen, Bob Hawks, Trudi Schmidt, Mitch Tropila, David Wanzenried, Carol Williams, Taryn Purdy, and Prudence Gildroy.

Dear Senators:

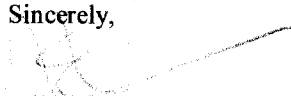
On behalf of the Miles City Area Economic Development Council and as a representative of Southeastern Montana Development Corporation (a regional CRDC **we are urging your support for HB 123 and a YES VOTE to extend the "sunset" clause on the 8 State Economic Development Programs funded by coal tax trust funds!**

It is critical that our regional CRDCs, local EDC's and our statewide SBDC be funded, at the minimum, at the level we have had the past 10 years if we cannot increase the funding that is desperately needed. These programs are the foundation of economic development programs in Montana and without these programs the regional, county and local economic development offices such as ours in Colstrip and Miles City will disappear in 2010.

These groups are vital, necessary and extremely important for the many counties and communities in our state, especially now in these difficult economic times. Our communities depend on the personal assistance and financial assistance through RLF funds to help businesses stay operating and to assist in new business development whenever possible.

Please vote YES to HB 123 to continue to support economic development for our Montana communities.

Sincerely,


Mike Coryell,
Executive Director

Lake County
Community Development Corporation

Certified Regional Development Corporation/Western Rural Development Region

March 9, 2009

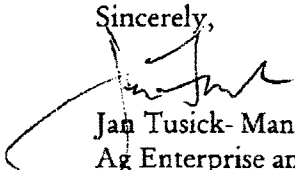
To: Senator Keith Bales, Chairman, Senate Finance and Claims Committee and Members of the Senate Finance and Claims Committee

RE: HB123 Extend sunset on key economic development programs

This letter is in support of HB583 that would extend the sunset on key economic development programs for Montana. These programs have provided essential support to the clients of Lake County Community Development Corp. and the Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center, a food business incubator that serves food business and value added enterprises statewide. While we understand the constraints of the General Fund Budget, it is important to consider the investments that have been made to date through these programs and now is the time to continue our investment in the future development of our economy.

I urge the committee to support this bill. Your vote will insure we have the ability to meet the challenges of today's economy with proactive economic development programs.

Sincerely,



Jan Tusick- Manager
Ag Enterprise and Cooperative Development Program
Certified Cooperative Development Specialist

407 Main Street SW • Ronan, MT • 59864
Phone: 406-676-5901 • Fax: 406-676-5902 • TDY TDD-711
www.lakecountycdc.org www.mtmountainmarket.org
"This institution is an equal opportunity provider"

**Lake County
Community Development Corporation**

Certified Regional Development Corporation/Western Rural Development Region

March 9, 2009

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Sincerely,



Jan Tusick- Manager
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SouthEastern Montana SBDC Scoreboard

Counseling Activity	Since 1997	Last 12 Months (as of December 31, 2008)
Number of Clients	857	114
Average Hours Per Client	5.88	6.58 (excludes travel)

	Since 1997	Last 12 Months
Jobs Created	317	86
Jobs Retained	367	34
Total Jobs	684	120
Capital Infusion	\$13,110,253	\$3,079,158
Total Funding	\$16,464,429	\$3,596,386

SouthEastern Montana SBDC Comments:

"Thank you again for all the help and advice. I couldn't have done it without the SBDC."

"Blayr was awesome she went over and beyond what I thought she could and should do for me. She was a blessing to me."

"If we had the information we received today 14 years ago, our company would run smoother."

"Its nice to have a support system just a phone call away."

"Wow! I am so thankful to have this kind of quality service in my Easter MT town."

"We have received a great deal of assistance from your organization and will no doubt be utilizing your offerings and input in the near future. Your organization and those who operate it are SUPER! We have nothing but positive experiences and received sound advice."

"More funding is needed for this service. Montana has a huge land area that the counselors need to cover. Just the travel alone takes a huge amount of funding."

"Blayr was an extreme help to me. She is willing to see me in person."

"Blayr is great."

"The classes geared toward small business is very valuable for me and my business."

"The information received was outstanding."



Hearing for HB 123
Senate Finance and Claims Committee

Letter of Support from the
Montana Grain Growers Association

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I write today on behalf of the Montana Grain Growers Association in support of HB 123 - to extend coal trust funded economic development programs. We strongly support the economic development programs funded by this appropriation and urge you to pass this bill.

The mission of the Montana Cooperative Development Center (MCDC), one of the programs to be funded through this bill, is to promote and develop cooperative business models for rural Montana. As a statewide resource, the MCDC works with new and existing groups to evaluate practical business models and assist in the establishment of viable business entities within rural communities. Their track record is impressive, and they work not only with agricultural interests, but with retail, fitness, manufacturing, housing and other industries. MCDC offers their services at little to no cost due to support from state and federal financial assistance. It is imperative they continue to be funded through ongoing state appropriations.

Another program funded by this legislation, The Montana Board of Research and Commercialization Technology, encourages economic development through investment in research and commercialization projects including research in production agriculture. Through a competitive grant process, where projects must be matched with non-state funds, the board awards grants to research projects that have a clear path to commercialization. We are disappointed that this bill cuts funding by 2/3 for this important development program and we encourage you to reinstate that funding if possible.

And the Montana Growth Through Agriculture (GTA) Program is a grant and loan program established by the Montana Legislature specifically to strengthen and diversify Montana's agricultural industry through the development of new agricultural products and processes. GTA funds also face a 50% cut through this bill and we encourage reinstatement of those funds.

Agriculture is a continually changing and progressive industry and these economic development programs provide a valuable service to the industry and to Montana's economy. Montana specific research, commercialization of that research and business development in our rural communities will continue to strengthen our state's most important industry.

Please vote yes on HB 123.

Thank you,

Lola Raska
Executive Vice President
Montana Grain Growers Association